


# **Which factors influence the success of youth-driven community initiatives?**

Best practice in governance and funding models

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Prepared by Youthline for Waitakere City Council

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*This report has been prepared to supplement the Project Freespace report submitted by Youthline to Waitakere City Council in 2008. The purpose of this report is to briefly inform best practice around approaches to governance and funding models for youth-driven community initiatives, particularly where there is local government involvement.*

*The models of governance and funding described here are based on available literature, and, where relevant, Youthline's expertise and are only recommendations; they are not an evaluation of any service.*

Youthline, 2009.

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## INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

As concepts of youth development evolve and develop, we need to ensure that sound models of implementation are concurrently developed if we are to achieve good outcomes for young people and the wider community. In other words, we need to make sure that youth development in practice meets the expectations of theory. The gaps between the theory and real-world outcomes can only be bridged by firstly implementing programmes, and then evaluating and refining them. The lessons learned from a literature base of applied youth development, with an ultimate goal of developing standards of best practice which reliably achieve the best outcomes for young people.

A primary goal of youth development is to increase young people's involvement in decision-making. However, the justification for including young people in decision-making is not singularly about youth development; it is also the essence of representative democracy, to ensure the voice of a substantial part of our population is heard (McGachie & Smith, 2003). Youth participation in decisions affecting their lives is a right recognised under the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by New Zealand. It is essential for community-based projects which support young people to have substantial youth input, a concept which is now widely supported both in New Zealand and elsewhere. Extending this concept, young people should not be limited to making decisions on issues presented to them, but should also be involved in wider processes – for example, determining which decisions are to be made, and how they are to be made. Hence, youth participation, operating at a high level, means young people in governance.

Starting from the basis that young people should be involved in governance, it is the purpose of this report to describe how this might happen and what a best practice governance model involving young people might look like. This is discussed in the context of Project Freespace, a community-based project initiated by Waitakere City Council to provide a youth space where young people are able to facilitate access to support services. Following youth development principles, this project has involved young people in all stages, right from inception. Project Freespace has been substantially bolstered by funding secured by the successful Waitakere City Council / Youth Action 4 Change application in 2008 to the Youth Development Partnership Fund, administered by the Ministry of Youth Development. This has provided a 12-month scholarship for a young person, working as a youth development worker and coordinating the service. The Freespace project has evolved into SUSS-IT, a youth information service housed in Henderson.

The challenge for SUSS-IT, as for any similarly positioned service, is to secure access to long-term funding, something which is not provided by The Youth Development Partnership Fund. Instead, this means gathering support from funding agencies and the community.

In practice, services should consider either: existing within an existing agency which can provide some administrative and funding support; or, separately formalising their existence as a legal

entity such as an incorporated society or a charitable trust. A well-organised and administrated legal entity is in a better situation to secure funding. In fact, most large funding bodies only support legal entities.

Youthline is used as a case study throughout this document. We believe that as a growing youth development organisation that operates a social enterprise model, our experience in this area is valuable. Youthline has evolved from an operation with a \$40,000 per annum operating budget, to a registered charitable trust employing nearly 70 paid staff. Youthline also acts as a hosting organisation for smaller groups, providing assistance for funding applications. Hence, we believe that adding relevant aspects of Youthline's experience will enhance the usability of this document.

While this report refers to SUSS-IT and Project Freespace for context, and outlines some opportunities available to this project moving forward, it is not an evaluation of SUSS-IT, nor of any service. Further, this report outlines only best practice recommendations for community services with youth-led governance. This report does not include any liaison with SUSS-IT and the recommendations given are in no way a reflection on any of the practices of SUSS-IT.

## **SCOPE**

This document discusses the following broad questions:

- *What makes a community initiative successful and sustainable?*
- *Which models of governance are most likely to be successful? How might any factors of the model differ when local government is involved?*
- *When community initiatives are led by young people, what additional factors need to be accounted for?*
- *In such an initiative, what funding models might work to build a sustainable service?*

In order to discuss these issues in a practical context, some supporting information is also provided. For example, organisations need some structures in place (such as a model of evaluation), before funding or governance models can be successfully applied to it. Describing these structures and frameworks is therefore a key to the funding and governance models.

This report will draw on both academic and grey literature, including relevant case studies, as well as Youthline's experiences in transitioning from being primarily a single service to a multi-faceted youth development organisation. Together, these information sources will provide a useful basis and practical for developing sustainability in an organisation, rather than providing a purely theoretical basis, which could leave those using this information with extra steps in order to unpack the information and apply it.

It is not within the scope of this report to describe the methods for facilitating youth participation, other than where the methods contribute to sustainability of a youth governance initiative. Youth facilitation is well described in the existing literature both within New Zealand and elsewhere.

The structure of this report treats funding models and governance structures separately, in order to discuss the aspects of each clearly. However, in practice, the two are closely intertwined. At a basic level, the governance of an organisation will determine how decisions about funding are made, while the funding model itself will define the scope and scale of governance.

## SERVICE & OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The basis of every service is administration. Administration must be held as a core responsibility within an organisation, in order for that organisation to be able to function in the long-term. Administrative work is often seen as a barrier to the service delivery because it takes up time. However, administration is paramount and without it there is no professional basis to the service. This consideration is especially for small organisations, where there are not likely to be any administrative staff, and this workload is shared by the workers.

Where organisations are hosted by a separate agency, the administrative load may be undertaken to a greater or lesser extent by this umbrella agency. Youthline's regional centres are separate legal entities, and maintain their own governance structures, however Youthline's Ponsonby office bears a large amount of the administrative and funding work for different centres. Critical to the sustainability of a hosted service is that its internal governance has a shared vision with the external governance of the umbrella organisation.

### PACKAGING

Youthline's experience is that community organisations must develop a clear understanding of what they do, and be able to clearly communicate this to funders. This can be viewed on two levels. Firstly the organisation should be able to be viewed as a package of delineated services (where more than one service is offered). Secondly, those services should be modular, and easily broken down into their constituent parts. This is critical to the internal identity and the external image of the organisation.

Youthline formed in 1970 from the realisation that while there were phone counselling services available to the general public, they did not optimally address the issues of young people. This niche was Youthline's single major service for a substantial period. While the youth help line remains a core Youthline service (and is now complemented by text message, email and MSN counselling), Youthline also offers services as diverse as youth development programmes, youth work services, face-to-face counselling, a pregnancy centre, a youth information service, youth sector research, and an alternative education school, amongst many others. The challenge has been transforming the organisation in appropriate ways from a relatively informal grouping to a structured charitable trust, operating a social enterprise model, with an annual turnover in excess of \$3 million.

While considering this, it is also important to note that Youthline's original single major service has also always been considered a package. The youth help line comprises a range of modular components, for example an information and referral service, a general counselling service, an acute/crisis counselling service, and a peer mentoring service.

SUSS-IT currently offers a single service, based around an identified need to deliver information in better ways to young people. This has clear parallels with Youthline's situation when it

started. Doing one service well is an excellent foundation for an organisation seeking funding, as it means that there is a single and clear basis for communication with funders. It may potentially mean that there is a limited and predictable need for funding. However, the single service undoubtedly unfolds into modular components which the service needs to understand and be able to also communicate with funders.

It is also worth noting another challenge for small-scale initiatives to ensure sustainable service delivery over the long-term. Many such projects rely on a single worker to primarily deliver services and coordinate administration. The loss of this individual potentially threatens the entire service. A case study of building sustainability is presented later.

## **LINKING AND VISIBILITY**

A critical aspect of being well positioned to receive sustainable funding is having high visibility in the community. It is becoming increasingly important to have an online presence as well as offering physical services, especially when working with young people. Internet services are becoming a more common part of services ranging from mental health interventions (Ybarra & Eaton, 2005) to education (Bahr & Rohner, 2004). The impersonal nature of Internet-based information can help reduce the stigmas associated with seeking help (Lauder, Chester & Berk, 2007).

The Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa outlines how youth development requires a big-picture approach (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002). Young people live in a world of rapidly advancing technologies which have changed the nature of interpersonal communication. Further, young people are typically at the forefront of adopting and finding innovative uses for these new technologies (Sieber & Sabatier, 2003). In this context, services aimed at young people should use as much of this technology as feasible, where this might improve connections to young people by either making young people more likely to access services or more comfortable when doing so.

SUSS-IT currently provides a personal service on its premises for young people, between 10am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. Services such as SUSS-IT must evaluate their own model of delivery with actual and potential users. However, separate to any potential for elements of electronic service delivery, there are also a range of opportunities to promote services and link them in with surrounding services through information technology.

### *The Internet*

Whether delivering to young people or to other groups, services are likely to benefit from having an online presence. In fact, it is difficult to imagine services for which there would be no benefit in being represented online. Such a presence may assist in service promotion or networking with other services. A good online presence includes having a high ranking in popular search engines such as Google for searches of both the service name and key words from the service description.

Having a simple-to-find website assists people in finding the service's physical location, knowing what is offered through the service and being able to keep up to date with any events or other changes to the service.

Online networking provides a simple measure to link to similar services, link to umbrella organisations and to generally build an online profile.

Social services may choose to be listed in the national family services directory <http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/> run by Ministry of Social Development. These services are then open for referrals from services such as the 211 community helpline (0800 211 211).

Currently, SUSS-IT does not have a website, although it has excellent opportunities for a web presence. All of the following domains are available:

- <http://www.suss-it.co.nz>
- <http://www.suss-it.org.nz>
- <http://www.suss-it.com>
- <http://www.suss-it.org>
- <http://www.sussit.co.nz>
- <http://www.sussit.org.nz>
- <http://www.sussit.com>
- <http://www.sussit.org>

As there are free content management options and cheap website hosting plans, creating a basic website with primarily static content does not need to be an expensive process, nor intensive in terms of maintenance. Universities and other tertiary institutes are often useful contacts, as students are frequently available for small design /web projects. This also has no cost to the charitable organisation.

Additional measures for building an online presence that are commonly used by youth services are social networking sites including Bebo, MySpace and Facebook. Again, these represent a convenient way to keep in contact with people. Provided this is able to be worked into an existing job, and assuming that access to the Internet is available, this is also entirely free for services.

### *Linking within the community*

Traditional links between community services remain as important as ever. Linking with like-minded groups, particularly those in close proximity, can create a network of reciprocal support, which is valuable to groups with limited resources. As described below, close links can form the basis for collaborative and complementary work; this can be effective for funding strategies as it helps to avoid service duplication.

Beyond the advantages of networking and support, strongly linked organisations are also better positioned to undertake collaborative funding applications. Some funders actively encourage collaborative projects, which benefit from the added input and resources of an additional group.

SUSS-IT is fortunate to be located in a community space, where a range of other community and youth services operate. While maintaining independent governance, there may be opportunities



for SUSS-IT to build close links with, for example Global Café, or the wider Zeal Waitakere initiative, as a complementary service. It makes sense for SUSS-IT to hold close links with Zeal Waitakere for proximity and shared principles, however, there are doubtless numerous other opportunities for relationships.

The aspects of linking and collaboration relating to governance are discussed in the *Sustainable Models of Governance* section below.

### *Evaluation*

Sustainable services are likely to conduct regular evaluation which feeds back into service delivery, resulting in a dynamic service which is constantly improving to meet the needs of its users. Evaluation can provide the justification for a service being funded by demonstrating that it is doing an effective job. It also shows a willingness to adapt and respond to aspects of service delivery which can be improved. Services cannot operate sustainably without evaluation. For an example of the purpose and approaches to evaluation in New Zealand (within youth one-stop-shops), refer to the report *Are we doing a good job? Providing evidence of the effectiveness of Youth One Stop Shops* (Youthline, 2008a).

## FUNDING MODELS

There are a range of funding avenues available to community initiatives. For some projects, a single source of funding may be adequate, while others may need a combination of sources. The use of multiple sources may reflect either the scale of the project or the nature of the available funding; however, it is likely that several funding sources will be used for long-term, sustainable projects.

Funding sources exist along a continuum from small and relatively informal sources of one-off funding to large, formally organised funding bodies that provide substantial, and often ongoing funding to projects. It is worth noting here that large funders frequently only support legal entities such as charitable trusts and incorporated societies, the discussion of these entities is found in the *Sustainable Models of Governance* section below.

Feasey (2007) states that the funders in New Zealand fall into the following five broad categories:

- *Statutory*. These funders include community trusts, licensing trusts, gaming machine societies and the Lottery Grants Board.
- *Voluntary*. This group includes other trusts, such as family trusts, universities, and Maori organisations.
- *Business/corporate*. Businesses may offer direct funding, such as sponsorship, or funding through a foundation, such as the Vodafone Foundation.
- *Government*. Local and central government offer a range of funding opportunities.
- *Personal*. Individuals also make their own donations to organisations, either by their own motivation or when contacted (street collecting, mail-out donations et cetera).

Feasey (2007) also notes that organisations seeking funding need to understand some of the differences between these groups, which are poorly understood by most at present. He notes, for example, that a gaming trust legally must distribute money within three months of receipt and cannot fund projects that will not take place within the next 12 months. Other funders have more flexibility, however, without understanding these differences and the individual requirements of funders, organisations stand to waste much time with ill-directed applications. Fund-seekers can use databases such as Fundview [http:// www.fis.org.nz](http://www.fis.org.nz). Although access to Fundview is subscription-based, free access is also available through many public libraries.

As an example of the range of funding opportunities available, Youthline's funding comes from numerous sources. This is the basis of Youthline's funding model as a social enterprise, and includes the following diverse sources (from largest to smallest):

- *Contract work.* Youthline holds a number of government contracts to provide services, such as community helplines and youth transition services. These have been new services that Youthline has tendered for, set up and delivered. As these are provided to service specifications in the contract, it is unlikely that small organisations are going to be resourced well enough to undertake such work.
- *Independent revenue generation.* Youthline operates a social enterprise model, which comprises a range of revenue-generating activities (see below). Most organisations are able to undertake at least some of the activities described in this category, particularly fundraising and some levels of sponsorship.
- *Donations.* Donations from businesses and individuals are still an important component of Youthline's funding. It is important to establish a service's reputation before expecting to rely on this type of funding. For many organisations, building a database of donors is preferable to seeking one-off donations.
- *Grants.* Youthline secures funding through grant funding bodies, which support a range of core services. Funders support a wide range of organisations, provided they meet the criteria listed in the grant applications. Well-tailored grant applications that demonstrate a good understanding of the funder and a worthwhile and sustainable service can be a substantial source of revenue for services.

Of these, the independent revenue category may be most in need of additional explanation. Youthline undertakes active fundraising activities at events, which is typically volunteer-intensive work. Youthline owns a building in Ponsonby, Auckland, which is a revenue-generating asset. Space in this facility is rented out to a range of organisations and to face-to-face counsellors. Youthline actively engages with businesses for sponsorship, which supports numerous services and specific events held throughout the year. Other business prospects and services also contribute to Youthline's social enterprise, for example selling merchandise through the main Youthline office and via the website, and more recently, through a café venture onsite at Ponsonby, which services not only staff and clients, but also members of the local business community. In this sense, Youthline's major asset – the building – is a core to many other parts of the organisation's ability to generate revenue.

## **FUNDING SUSS-IT**

In Youthline's 2008 report to Waitakere City Council, Project Freespace's Youth Advisory Group stated that the resulting Project Freespace service should be self-sustainable to the extent that it is possible. For SUSS-IT to become self-sustaining providing its current service, it will require ongoing funding approximately equal to its first-year funding of \$70,000. This initial funding was made available through a Youth Development Partnership Fund (YDPF) grant. This grant has provided an excellent opportunity to establish the facility, including the funding of a youth worker through a youth scholarship programme. However, YDPF funding has a maximum term of three years from each grant, and priority given to projects from councils that are not previous fund recipients.

Hence, SUSS-IT will have to secure long-term funding elsewhere. The best avenues for building self-sustainability lie within the social enterprise model, discussed throughout this report.

By utilising a range of sources for funding, the facility will be less susceptible to the loss of any single source. For example, the YDPF provides one-off payments to initiatives; such funding sources are vital kick-starts for services and can cover set-up costs or expansions costs. Other funding sources such as local fundraising or sponsorship from local businesses in the community may provide more steady funding for ongoing costs, such as employee salaries.

SUSS-IT is fortunate to have a permanent community space provided by Waitakere City Council. This could feasibly be used to host fundraising events in the community, which might be supported by the family and friends of those who use the space, as well as members of the wider community. As noted above, Youthline's facility is a critical part of its social enterprise.

## **BUILDING A FUNDING MODEL**

When an organisation understands what it does, how it wants to do it, what funding is available, and it has the appropriate networks around it for support, it may begin to build a funding model that works for it. Without all of these areas in place, there is little hope that an organisation will be eligible for substantial funding.

Several options are available, describing different, broad approaches to funding. The scale and nature of the organisation will be an important factor in deciding what may be appropriate.

### *Funding as a hosted service*

Suited to small operations, this option sees the administrative burden lifted to some extent from the service. The service is housed (sometimes physically) within a larger agency, whose resources may be able to help with administrative and financial support, including funding applications. In Ponsonby, Youthline offers administrative and funding support to a number of small, local organisations, which are generally housed in its community facility. This is seen as a good option by those involved as they still retain governance of their organisation.

### *Funding as a separate organisation*

Larger organisations will have the internal capacity to administer financial and funding matters effectively. In this situation, it is likely that the organisation will need to consider incorporating as a society or trust for the benefit of its funding, and the clarity and structure brought by operating under such a model. Aspects of incorporation are discussed later.

### *Social enterprise model*

Suited to a range of organisations, a social enterprise model opens up avenues for funding that might fall outside the scope of traditional charitable work. Small organisations may select elements of a social enterprise model that fit their service model, meaning that different

organisations could be self-described as social enterprises and access entirely different funding streams. Social enterprises share in common a triple bottom line, promoting social, environmental and economic sustainability.

Youthline's vision of social enterprise is building the economic security to deliver services to the community. The business model of 'not-for-private-profit' under which Youthline operates means that any operating surplus is reinvested in the community to expand or improve services. Social enterprise remains a new model in New Zealand, however it is a rapidly expanding area, which warrants consideration from all community organisations looking at better supporting their service delivery.

# SUSTAINABLE MODELS OF GOVERNANCE

## *Introduction*

Governance describes the methods by which organisations and wider social structures are run, including the processes by which stakeholders provide input, what decisions are made and how they are made (for a discussion of governance and its definitions, see Plumptre & Graham, 1999). As such, clear governance is essential to make all power processes transparent, to reduce conflict between stakeholders, and to streamline decision-making.

Applying the principles of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002) at an organisational level can inform what is required to build consistency and resiliency in a youth organisation. Indeed, youth governance of a community initiative may be perceived both as a special case of governance and as a process of youth participation operating high on the rungs of Hart's ladder. This perception is both convenient, as the literature base around non-trivial youth participation is large, and appropriate, as Hart equates youth participation with youth citizenship, reflecting the right to take part in governance (Hart, 1992).

In order to be sustainable, the governance model needs to ensure the continued, enthusiastic support of the young people who drive the project. These young people need to be treated with respect, and that their time and input is valued. Hence, members of the YAG need to be remunerated for their time in meetings. This does not necessarily mean monetary payment but does mean an exchange; personal and leadership development opportunities or experiences that build their skills and connections, in return for the position and responsibilities that they take on. Additional provisions, including transportation considerations are discussed in the original Project Freespace report.

In reality, young people's views are rarely homogenous. It is possible that there may be some substantial differences in opinions between those young people who feel motivated to be part of an advisory group for the service and those who may simply use it. Building sustainable governance means that the service users need to be recognised as a distinct group whose feedback and opinions are critical for the success of the service.

The risks that this process provides (through delay in decision making or challenges in organisational alignment) need to be mitigated by a diversity of people in the governance role. An example of this is bringing external people into a committee structure to balance the naturally internally focused nature of elected committees. Another example of providing ongoing consistency for a fledging community group or a group in trouble is to provide an external consultant who attends the "committee" meeting and provides process guidance.

Also noteworthy, is that young people often feel 'fatigue' from over-consultation, in particular where they cannot see actions resulting from their input (e.g. Sinclair, 2004; Youthline, 2008b). For these reasons, it is important that there are not only opportunities for all young people to

contribute ideas to the running of the organisation, but also that there are open and transparent processes in how the information is used and easily accessible information on how feedback is being used.

### *Level of Involvement of Young People*

In Australia, the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (2004) notes that there are different levels of involvement that young people may have in committees, boards or other governance structures. Each of these different levels has different advantages and disadvantages and may suit different types of projects. Each level, however, can involve meaningful youth participation. The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (2004) define three levels of involvement:

- *Young people as a minority.* Several young people in a mix of adults might be a good model for many projects, particularly when the issues at stake affect a wide range of people. However, if only a single young person is involved, they may be intimidated and find it difficult to contribute. Mentoring, perhaps from an adult committee member, may be helpful.
- *Young people as a majority.* Under this model, young people are often the decision-makers, with the input and experiences of other people. It may suit situations such as when decisions are made regarding service delivery to young people. Care should be taken with the assignment of roles within such a committee, so that power is shared in the way it was intended.
- *Only young people.* This youth-driven model gives complete decision-making. It may work as reference groups or advisory groups. When attached to a larger organisation, good communication is necessary to ensure that this model is effective. Although youth-centric, adults may act as external consultants for the group.

The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (2004) also note that committee structures can change over time. Flexibility is important, as it may mean that the final model employed is tailored specifically to the needs of the young people who are involved. This is likely to have better results than a governance structure which is imposed, and ultimately improve the sustainability of the process.

### *Sustainability*

Many of the elements of practice which contribute to sustainability have already been described. However, the concepts are illustrated effectively by a New Zealand case study. McGachie and Smith (2003) describe the processes occurring within the Otago University Student's Association which promote sustainability. The key has been the enthusiasm of the student community to be a part of a successful association which has direct relevance to their own welfare. This indicates that building a sustainable base of young people to replenish the youth participation aspects of an organisation starts with providing a relevant, effective and visible service. When working with young people this has the additional and inevitable concern that young people

## **GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES**

Perhaps the most critical component of any service is governance. Good governance provides clarity internally and externally. Even if a service is delivered and administered wholly by a single person, having a clear sense of how decisions are made and how service users may provide input and feedback is valuable. The reality is that a good service will in fact have input from many people.

### *Legal entities*

As described above, long-term and sustainable services need to have formal, legal structures in place to be eligible for much of the available funding. This level of organisational structure is critical to governance, as it determines much about governance processes. Two main legal entity types that organisations may want to consider are incorporated societies and charitable trusts. Both of these are described on the Ministry of Economic Development's Societies and Trusts Online website, <http://www.societies.govt.nz>.

Incorporated societies require a minimum of 15 members, who meet as an association. This is generally intended for trade, sport or hobby groups but may include other types of groups as well and can have a charitable purpose. Societies wishing to incorporate must devise a clear and detailed set of rules. The Incorporated Societies Act 1908 sets out issues which must be included in these rules, although many other inclusions may be helpful for individual groups.

There is currently a \$100 filing fee to start an incorporated society, and some obligations, such as providing an annual financial statement.

A charitable trust requires a minimum of two trustees. It must have a charitable purpose, meaning that the trust promotes education, religion, the relief of poverty or another purpose with benefit to the community. Similar to the rules of an incorporated society, a charitable trust must have a trust deed which outlines key aspects of how the trust is run. Any profits generated by the trust must be used for its charitable purpose.

Generally speaking, an incorporated society is inwardly focused for the benefit of its members, while a charitable trust is outwardly focused for the benefit of the community. Either legal entity will require some input from a lawyer, which may be expensive for a small organisation. For this reason, some smaller services are more suited to being hosted by a larger organisation.

## **INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Local government organisations have their own systems of governance, which may differ greatly in scale and nature from those used by a small community initiative. Nonetheless, relationships between community initiatives and local government is common and often necessary.

Unlike central government, local government is well-placed to understand the workings of its communities and be involved with initiatives on a small scale. As in the case of SUSS-IT, local authorities can support an initiative through the funding available from the YDPF. Local



authorities also provide more direct support, such as providing the facility used by SUSS-IT, or providing funding to projects.

Where community initiatives are youth-driven, some extra effort may be required on the part of local government to facilitate a useful partnership. Providing some training for adults who will work with young people may be justified to develop the value of participatory processes. While young people are frequently recognised as having worthwhile and unique input, it is also necessary to acknowledge that young people can have different ways of expressing their ideas and may be comfortable in different settings than adults. Ultimately, when young people have appropriate fora to express themselves, the quality of output is often sufficient to convince the adults involved that the involvement of young people is beneficial (McGachie & Smith, 2003). Alternatively, regular liaison between a youth driven governance body and local government could be facilitated through the district or city youth council, where one is available. As Waitakere City has an active youth council, this may be suitable for any youth initiatives requiring local government involvement.

Supporting young people in governance roles can mean finding a balance between providing resources and allowing space for young people to make their own decisions. In Nelson, the city's youth council has developed substantially from its inception in 1998. McGachie and Smith (2003) state that the Nelson Youth Council has been allowed a degree of autonomy which recognises the importance of genuine youth participatory processes. The youth council is attached to another council committee, and an adult representative from this committee also sits on the youth council. Finding the balance between giving support and allowing independence in decision-making is essential to ensure both that young people want to be part of the process and that the process is sustainable and worthwhile.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations summarise the options discussed for building a sustainable community organisation. Together, these recommendations create a picture of a model that may work for a service such as SUSS-IT, where the goal is to work collaboratively with local government and to drive a sustainable service governed by or with youth participation. As emphasised already, a number of wider structures need to be in place for a funding / governance model to work, hence the outline of these is included in the recommendations below.

It is critical to note that this report is not an evaluation of SUSS-IT, and the inclusion of a concept below only represents a best practice recommendation. It is not an indication of whether SUSS-IT currently does or does not undertake the action described.

### SERVICE

- *Packaging and transparency.* Package services so that they are easily communicated with potential funders.
- *Networking and visibility.* Link with as many relevant services as practical. Build an online presence, and actively participate online. Exchange website links.
- *Administration.* Central to all organisations, administration must be held as the core of the work done. If operating as a service held within another agency, the umbrella agency must ensure that the administrative load is managed.
- *Staff sustainability.* Small services in particular should ensure that the investment in individuals is not so great that the service cannot exist without them. Where services are built around one individual, care should be taken to ensure that their skills and knowledge can be transferred to others as needed.
- *Evaluation.* Services must formally undertake evaluation of their services to ensure they are doing an effective job.

### FUNDING

- *Sources of funding.* Services should identify a range of funding streams. Some aspects of social enterprise are likely to be relevant for any charitable service and warrant close investigation.
- *Funding models.* Any model of funding must be appropriate for the scale and nature of the organisation applying it. The funding model should also integrate with the governance and legal structures of the organisation.

- *Collaborate.* Work with agencies close in proximity, mindset and interest to ensure that services are complementary, and communicate this commitment to funders.

## GOVERNANCE

- There is no single model of governance which fits everyone. A starting point is determining the level to which young people are to be involved in governance. Which in turn relates to the purpose and type of organisation.
- The organisational structure will guide governance. Hence, determining if the service will be hosted or separate, and whether the organisation should be incorporated will be factors in determining the frame for governance.
- It is no longer debated whether young people should be involved in governance, only how this can best be done. The balance must be struck between creating effective support for young people and allowing the necessary autonomy required by genuine processes of youth participation.
- Building sustainability in a service for young people starts with effectively delivering the right service. Young people will take part if they: know a service is effective; are made to feel welcome to participate in its delivery or governance; and know their contribution is valued and listened to.
- Building in consistency at a governance level is vital for an organisation to mature and develop.

### KEY ELECTRONIC RESOURCES MENTIONED IN THIS REPORT

Fundview – New Zealand funding database  
<http://www.fis.org.nz/index.php?page=FundView>

Societies and Trusts Online  
<http://www.societies.govt.nz>

Ministry of Youth Development, New Zealand youth participation case studies  
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